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THE "A.L." BRIGHT STORY READERS.

No. 24.
(Eighth Edition.)

Imso 570
Grade II.

STORY OF A CAT:

TOLD BY HERSELF.

By Mlle. C. WISLEY.

Prepared by ALFONZO GARDINER.

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STORY OF A CAT.

TOLD BY HERSELF.

CHAPTER I.

MY EARLY DAYS.

I was born one fine day in the month of March, in a large house in a big city. My mistress was very fond of cats, and always had many of them in the house.

2. One of her pets was a fine cat with very long, silky hair. This was my mother, and I learnt, when I grew up, that these cats came first from Per'-sia.

My mistress had several like myself; but she had other cats also. These were only kept in the kitchen and the out-houses to catch mice.

3. All the cats in the house were shown great kindness, for my mistress was so good, that she wished to make all living things about her as happy as she could.

4. When I first opened my eyes to the light, I found myself, with two little brothers, in a large basket; we were wrapped up in a blanket, soft

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and warm. My mother was so kind to us that she hardly left us for a moment, even to take the food which her mistress used to bring to her.

At such times the lady would look at us, take us up with care, one after the other, and stroke us gently. I think I can still hear her say, when she took me in her arms, "Oh, how very pretty you are!"

5. My mother did not like to see her mistress fondling us. She would walk round and round the basket, set up her back and look full of care, as she saw her little ones taken out of their snug bed; and it was not till we were all put back again that she looked happy once more.

6. One morning, when I awoke, my little brothers were gone. I have never learnt what became of them, but my mother seemed in great trouble. She mewed in a very sad way, and walked about the house peeping into every corner as though she were trying to find them. She took greater care of me than ever, but before very long seemed to have forgotten her other little ones.

I do not think any harm came to my brothers. No doubt they were given away, as I was, later on.

7. Every day I became stronger, and my fur grew longer and more silky. I was as white as

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snow, all but a little black patch on my breast, and another one at the end of my tail. My whiskers got longer and longer every day, and as I grew bigger, I became more vain, for everybody praised my good looks.

I do not think I was a good little kitten. My mother tried all she could to keep me in my cradle, but I was soon able to climb to the top, and then jump down on the floor.

8. What grand times I had! I went round the room looking here and there on all sides, until my mother was full of fear lest I should come to harm. Then she would come and take me up by the skin of my neck, and put me back again in the basket.

9. And what fun I had with my dear mother! I climbed on her back, I played with her tail, I pulled her ears. She let me do just as I liked with her, and after I had tired myself with play I would go to sleep, while she licked my face and purred over me.

10. Oh, what a good mother she was, and how happy I was! I hope all you little children who read this story of my life will never forget the kindness of your own mothers. What joy it is to be near them, to have them watch over you and care for you, and to love you as I was loved.

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11. I am afraid I was not less wilful than you are; I wanted to go and run about all over. I had a great wish to visit every part of the house in which I was born, for it was a very large one. As yet, I knew only one room; this room had been to me the whole world, but now I wished to go to see the rest of the world by myself.

CHAPTER II.

FIRST STEPS INTO THE WORLD.

1. One evening, Mary, the servant-maid, forgot to close the door through which my mistress came when she paid us a visit. I saw this very quickly, and when my mother was having a nap after her supper, I slipped out of the basket and ran from the room.

2. The half-opened door led into a passage where the air seemed very cold. At first, I was afraid to go far from the door. I took one step forward, then another, prick-ing up my ears, and ready to run back in case of alarm. Everything was quiet, and as I became bolder I walked on, though with great care. It was night, but you know we cats can see in the dark.

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3. After a time, I found myself in a well-lighted room at the end of the passage, and the sound of a sweet voice struck my ear.

4. I stopped and listened, for I was pleased at the sound of the music. Without thinking, I leapt over a rich velvet curtain, and there I was among a large number of gentlemen and ladies. All were seated and very silent, except one person who was singing. I went forward into the middle of the room, and there I stood, for I was now frightened, and did not know which way to turn.

5. Every one turned to look at me, and some young ladies began to laugh and to whisper. My mistress rose quietly from her seat to take me to her arms; but, poor, little, simple thing that I was, I thought she meant to punish me, and I ran off amidst the legs of the company to hide myself.

6. In running, my paws caught a bunch of roses at the bottom of the dress of one of the ladies, and tore it off. I nearly upset a tall, young man who was standing on one leg, and I knocked over a lovely vase, full of flowers, which broke into a thousand pieces.

7. I was now so frightened that I knew not what to do. With one bound I jumped on to

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the knees of the gentleman who was seated at the piano. He stopped playing as if he had been shot. Some of the peo-ple laughed, others were vexed, and some of the ladies cried out, as if I had been a lion or a tiger.

8. At length my mistress caught me. She carried me off to where she was sitting, after making excuses to every-body for the scene I had caused, and placed me on her knee.

9. She stroked me, and soon the ladies came round and wished to look at me. Each one praised my beauty, and (what I did not like half so much), they passed me one to the other the better to ad-mire me.

10. One tall gentleman let me fall. I think he did it on purpose. My good mistress took me up and kissed me again and again; then, having rung for Mary, she told her to carry me back to my mother.

11. But Mary was getting her supper when my mistress rang. She did not like to be called away during her meals; so she lost her temper, and I had to suffer for it, for she shook me very hard.

12. My good mother, who had just awakened, kissed me ten-der-ly, and I soon forgot the rude treat-ment of Mary.

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But I did not forget the kindness of my mistress and her guests, and before I went to sleep I made up my mind to go and visit some other parts of the house as soon as I could.

13. The next morning Mary came for Mother and me, and took us into the little room where my mistress always had her breakfast. For many days we were taken to her while she was eating this meal, and we stayed there a part of the day when she did not go out.

14. She seemed to take great plea-sure in seeing me jump and ca-per about on the carpet. Sometimes I ran like a mad thing after my mother's tail while she quiet-ly lay on the cushion. Sometimes I would roll about the floor the balls of wool belonging to my mistress, and follow them into all the corners of the room.

15. What a nice state the wool was in after I had done with it! When Mary was rung for to wind the wool again, and to see my pretty ways, she would smile faintly, but I could see that she longed to whip me.

16. I must own that often I ought to have been punished, but my mistress was too fond of her cats, and she spoiled them; she did not correct them even when she ought to have done.

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17. As for myself, I was very badly brought up, and had it not been for Mary, I should not have had any good man-ners. I am now very thankful to her for making me behave myself. Those who punish us for faults and bad habits do us more good, after all, than those who say nothing about them, and let us do as we like.

CHAPTER III.

GIDDY WAYS AND THEIR PUNISHMENT.

1. As time went on, I began to see more and more of the world. Each day I was taken into the drawing-room, or the dining-room, and sometimes even on to the bed of my mistress. I was ad-mired and petted, and fed on all those things that cats like best.

2. I ought to have been happy, yet it was now that my sor-rows began. These came to me owing to my wilful ways and my greed. I was often cor-rect-ed by Mary, but, alas! I grew little better at first.

3. Sometimes I jumped on to the bed of my mistress without the least thought of what I was doing, and made large holes with my claws in the lace of the bed-cover. At other times I lapped up quite greedily the cream which the house-

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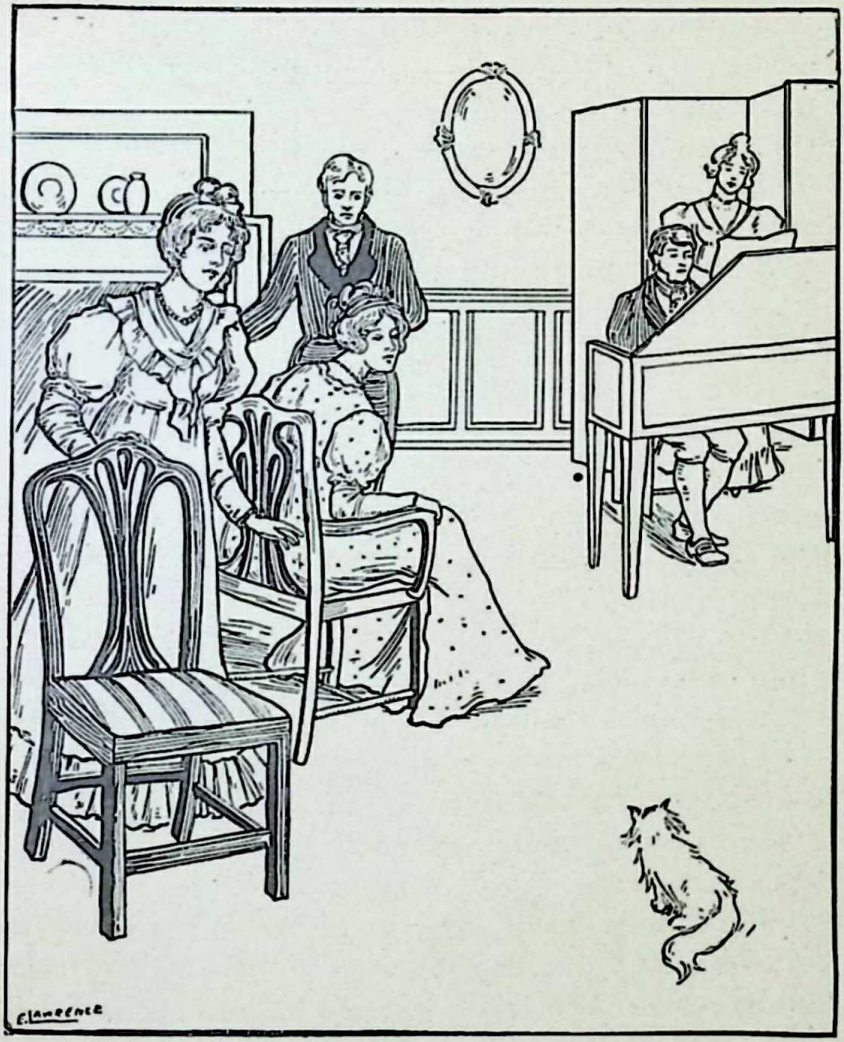

"I went forward into the middle of the room."—*Page* 5.

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maid had brought for the coffee, and two or three times I upset the jug in running away when I heard her coming.

4. Often I climbed on to the top shelf of a small side-board, in order to sniff at the things upon it. One day, I put my paws very lightly down between the or-na-ments, and had I been left alone I should not, perhaps, have broken anything. But the servant, who wished me to come down, shook her feather brush in my face and frightened me. Then, in jumping down, I upset some lovely China cups and saucers, and many other things. I was very wilful, and would do just as I liked, and I had to repent bit-ter-ly for my ill-deeds.

5. One day, my mistress had to go to a grand party. A beautiful bonnet, all lace-work and flowers, had been brought for her. It was laid on her bed, and a fool-ish fancy took me into the bedroom.

6. The wind from an open window was blowing the ribbons of the bonnet about. The flowers also were moving, and they made a nice rust-ling noise. I was much a-mused, and felt a great desire to play with them.

7. I watched first of all from a corner; then, in order to get nearer to the charming plaything,

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I climbed upon a chair. I next got on to the table by the side of the bed, my eyes always fixed on the bonnet. Then, moved by the love of play, I leaped with a bound right on to the top of it.

8. Down it went over the side of the bed, and there was I running after it, jumping over, and rolling with it. My claws caught in the lace; I pulled, in order to get them free, and tore it badly. At last, I found myself inside the bonnet under a big chair, when the door opened, and in came Mary.

9. She had come for the beautiful bonnet, and great was her sur-prise at not being able to find it where she had placed it. But she soon saw me under the chair, and, full of anger, she pulled me out of my hiding-place, and threw me out of the open window.

10. I fell on the lawn, close to the place where my mother was sleeping in the sun. She ran to me, and as I lay quite still for some moments, she thought I was killed. It seemed to me as though every bone in my body was broken.

11. However, I soon came round, got on to my feet, shook my ears, stretched myself, and felt little worse, for I was more frightened than hurt.

12. My good mother soon found out what I had been doing. She wept over me for being so

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foolish, and tried to make me see that the fault was my own.

13. "Why cannot you," said she, "be content with your balls and playthings, and not touch and tear everything you see? Only yesterday you tore away half our mistress's lace shawl by carelessly jumping on to her shoulder. The other day it was a cup of tea that you upset on her dress. You are always in mis-chief. In vain do I try to make you better; you take no notice."

14. My mother was only too right. Even whilst she was talking to me, I heard a slight noise in the hedge, and saw a little spar-row gaily hopping amongst the leaves. Instead of taking heed, as I should have done, to the words of my mother, I bounded away after the poor little bird.

15. I have heard it said that there are children as foolish as I was then; children who will not listen to the good ad-vice which is given to them. When anybody speaks to them, they take no notice, and think only of their play.

16. These children have not so much excuse as I had; for they have sense, and can think more than I, who am only a poor, little animal.

17. As I said, I did not listen to what my mother was saying.

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I set off, and after many jumps and ca-pers I caught the bird. I killed it, and then left it there. I was not hungry; it was only for the pleasure of catching it that I went after it; now I am sorry for what I did.

18. I soon forgot all about the bonnet, but Mary took it to show to my mistress, and she did not forget to tell her that I was the one who had spoilt it. At first the good lady was very much upset. She had had this bonnet made on purpose for the party to which she was going that day.

19. But she was so good that she did not lose her temper. She said gently to Mary, "Another time, take care to close the door of my room after you. And now, give me the bonnet that I wore last week; it will be good enough for to-day."

20. This gentleness did not suit the maid, and I heard her beg my mistress to get rid of me. "We can keep nothing from the claws of that wicked crea-ture," she said. "She touches and tears everything, and it takes all my time to repair the damage that she does. Please give *Fluff* (that was my name) away, but keep your other cats; they are not half so bad as she is."

21. My mistress, though she had great love for all her cats, knew that her servants might

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often have reason to complain of them. She found it very hard to be just to both.

22. At length she said to Mary, "I would give Fluff away, if I could be cer-tain that she would be happy, and be treated well."

23. Before that time, however, she had my likeness taken. The man made a pretty picture of me, laid down beside my mother on a velvet cushion, and everyone said the likeness was perfect.

24. Soon after this a lady, who was a great friend of my mistress, came to see her, along with her daughter, who was only seven years old. The little lady, whose name was Elsie, took a great fancy to me, and played with me all the time the visit lasted.

25. Just as they were saying good-bye, Elsie said to her mother, "Oh, mamma! I should like to have a pretty little cat like this." Her mother at once asked my mistress if she would part with me; "For," said she, "you have many other pretty cats, and I am sure my little Elsie would be delighted to have Fluff."

26. Just as they were talking, I rolled myself up on the rug in front of the fire and was soon fast asleep, so I do not know what more was said.

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27. All I re-mem-ber is that, when I awoke, I found myself in a pretty basket lined with blue satin.

CHAPTER IV.

CHANGES.

1. I was just going to dose again, when I heard a sweet, gentle voice which said, "Oh, Mamma! what a pretty basket, is it for me?"

"Yes, my dear Elsie, it is a present for you; go and open it gently and see what is in it."

2. Elsie ran to the corner of the fireside where I had been sleeping in the little basket. She gently raised the lid, and cried out, "Oh, mamma! how good you are! Isn't it a lovely little cat? Poor thing! it will be hungry. I must go at once and get it something to eat.

3. "Every morning I will give it some milk, and then I will play with it. You shall see how good I will be to it; I will not hurt it at all;" and happy little Elsie took me up in her arms and hugged me to her breast.

4. I looked round the room and saw at once that I was in a strange place, where everything was new to me.

After a time, my little mistress put me on the floor; at once I began to walk into every corner

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of the room, Elsie following me wherever I went.

5. Soon, her mother rang the bell for the servant to take me down to the kitchen to give me something to eat. The little girl wished to go with me, but her mother said she must not do so. "You must not, my dear girl, make such a pet of Fluff that you forget to do your lessons, and all those other things which I wish you to do."

6. Elsie made many promises. "Oh, mamma, I will not play with pussy when I ought to be doing other things!" said she, "I shall not forget what you say."

7. Elsie was a sweet little girl, and as kind as she was gentle. I found myself very happy in my new home, and my little mistress loved me very much. But, alas! her love for me soon made us part, for Elsie quickly forgot the promises she had made to her mother.

8. She always wanted to have me with her wherever she was. "I will not speak to her, nor even look at her; please may I have her, mamma?" and often her mother gave leave for us to be together. I was so young (I was not quite three months old), that I wanted her to play with me at all times.

9. When my young mistress sat with her book before her doing her lessons, I slipped under her

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chair and played with her toes. She sent me away quietly, laughing at me; but I had no sooner left her than I began some other tricks.

10. I jumped in the air; I ran round after my tail; I rushed from one end of the room to the other; so that, at last, they were forced to send me to the kitchen.

11. Elsie's mother was very cross with her little daughter for playing so much with me when she should have been doing other things. She said, "I shall have to send pussy away if you do not bear in mind what I have said to you."

12. Elsie promised her mother, once more, that she would not forget again. "I will not let my dear little pet come into the room at all when I am doing my lessons," she said.

13. If only my little mistress had kept her word and obeyed her mother, I should have stayed with her a very long while. But one morning, when she was doing her piano lesson, I found the door open and I went in. I thought I would join in the music, and I gave a little "mew!"

14. Elsie heard me at once. She got down from her stool, took me in her arms, stroked and petted me, and then sat down again with me on

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her knee. But I did not want to lie still there; I wanted to play with her hands, and so the piano was forgotten.

15. Soon after, Elsie's mother came in. "So, my child," said she, "this is the way you do your lessons when you are by yourself; I am very angry. You said you would not have pussy with you any more. I shall send her away this time."

16. "Oh, mamma," cried Elsie in tears, "I did not mean to be naughty."

"Do not say a word more, my girl; you have not kept your promise, and Fluff shall go away this evening."

17. At these words poor Elsie ran sobbing to her mother, and begged her not to send me away, but it was of no use. "No," said her mother, "you have so often said you would not play with pussy when you ought to be doing other things; I cannot let her stay here any longer."

18. Elsie had two little cousins, one called Jane, a little girl about six years old, and her brother Edmund, rather older. They often came to see Elsie and to play with her, and they were both very kind to me. Many times they had said, "I wish Fluff was our cat." So, when I heard Elsie's mother say that she would send

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"I wanted her to play with me at all times."—*Page* 16.

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me as a present to Jane, I felt rather pleased. But I was soon to find that life is full of troubles.

19. Jane and Edmund were two very spoilt children. They wanted to do just as they liked, and I soon found out that they did not know how to be kind and loving, as little Elsie had always been to me.

20. When the servant took me to Jane's house as a present from her aunt, both the children soon forgot their other playthings and thought of nothing but me. I was soon, however, the cause of much strife between them.

21. If Jane wished to nurse me, her brother wanted to do the same, and soon they got to fighting about me. One took me by the head, and the other by the paws or by the tail, and nearly pulled me to pieces; and these quarrels took place every day.

22. "It is my turn to have Fluff now," said Jane; "give her to me at once."

"No, you had her this morning," replied Edmund, "it is my turn now. You know you nursed her all last night and I have not had her at all."

23. "She is my cat," said Jane, "and if you do not let me have her, I will go and tell mamma at once."

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"Go! little tell-tale," said her brother, "you shall not have her." Then a battle began, and I was glad to get away from them both and hide myself in a corner of the room or under the sofa.

24. Even when these two naughty children were not fighting about me, they were still unkind to me; for Edmund would take me in his arms, go part of the way up the stairs, and then make me jump down, to see how I should fall on my four paws. Sometimes he would put me in my basket, tie the lid on, and then roll the basket over and over on the floor.

25. Jane was nearly as bad. She tried to dress me up in her doll's clothes, and almost choked me in doing so; then, when I tried to get away from her because she was hurting me, she would give me a smart slap.

26. Oh! how I wished I was back once more with my dear little Elsie, who never hurt me, nor did anything unkind to me at all.

27. When I tried to scratch either Jane or her brother, to let them know they were hurting me, they threw me down on the floor without caring at all how I fell, and ran off to tell their mother that I was naughty. If only I had been able to speak, I think I should have told their mother that it was they who were naughty.

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28. At last I made up my mind that I could not stay there any longer, and one day, when no one was looking, I slipped out into the garden.

CHAPTER V.

I RUN AWAY AND GET INTO WORSE TROUBLE.

1. I did not stop long in the garden. Creeping through the hedge I got into the street, and was free. But my troubles soon began again.

2. I walked along close up to the side of the houses, and half way down the street I looked round to see if there was some place where I could hide myself.

3. All at once I felt myself choking. Someone had come very quietly behind me, had thrown a handkerchief over my head, pulling it tight, and had lifted me up and run off with me.

My heart beat with terror, and I felt that the best thing to do was to try and keep quite still.

4. At last the man who had caught me got up to another man. "See, Jack," said he, "I have just found a cat."

"Well, Bob, where is it? I do not see it."

5. "Here, in my handkerchief; is it not a pretty one?" said he, as he raised up the corner of the handkerchief.

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"Well," replied Jack, "it will do; but we do not want a cat, it is of no use to us at all."

6. "Oh!" said Bob, "if you do not want it I will keep it. Some day, when I am tired of it, I can kill it and sell its skin."

7. Oh! how sad I felt when I heard these words, "Poor unhappy Fluff!" said I to myself. "After having been used so unkindly by those cruel children, I am now coming to a worse end. Oh, how I wish I was once more in the house of my first mistress!"

8. Bob and his friend walked along until they came to a house at the end of a dirty street. What a queer place it was! Everything untidy and dingy.

9. As soon as they entered, Bob put me down on the floor and I at once went and hid myself under a bed in one corner. I saw that Jack was carrying a Punch and Judy Show, which he began to take down from his shoulders.

10. From their talk, I learnt that they had been giving their show all day to try and get money, but they had not got much.

Jack was in a very bad temper. When he had lifted the show off his shoulders, he pushed it into a corner, and threw towards it a bag in which were three or four dressed-up dolls.

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Master Punch himself fell out of the bag, and I saw him quite plainly.

11. How sorry I was now that I had run away from my last home, for Jack seemed to be a very cross man. All the time he was grumbling at Bob, who went to the cupboard to get something for them to eat.

12. When they had finished their meal, they thought of me, and began to see where I had got to. How frightened I was! Bob tried to mew like a cat; "Mew, mew, mew!" Then he called, "Puss, puss, puss!"

13. "Come out, cat," said Jack, sharply, taking a stick in his hand and poking it under the bed. Luckily it did not touch me, and I did not move.

At last Bob took from his plate a mutton bone, and holding it between his fingers, began again to say, "Mew, mew, mew!"

14. For some time I had felt hungry, so I came out of my hiding-place very slowly. I only got to the middle of the floor, when Jack seized me by the back of the neck and held me up to look at me.

"I think," said he, "we can make some use of this little beast. You will have to take it in hand and teach it, so that it can do something in the show."

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15. Bob took me in his arms and began seeking for the collar, which I learnt had been worn by a cat that had died a short time before. Poor thing! no doubt it had died of hunger, and want, and bad treatment.

16. Then Jack gave orders to Bob that he was to put me in the bottom of the cupboard, and leave me there for two or three days without anything to eat. He said I should then be ready to learn what was to be taught me!

17. I do not wish to tell you of the sad life I led for the six weeks that I stayed with these two men. I am sure you would not like to hear of all the cruel things they did to me.

18. They made me sit up on my hind legs; they struck me with a stick which they made me hold between my fore-paws; they made me lie down as if I were dead, and then they beat me to make me lie there without moving, so that the people who came to see the show would think I was really dead.

19. And how hungry I was! They gave me so little to eat, that I was glad to have the chance of catching a mouse, a thing I had never tried to do before in the happy homes where I had been living up to now.

20. I do not think I was at all a clever cat;

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I did not seem to learn my lessons well, for one day Jack said, "The little beast is no good at all; you must try and get a better one."

21. Bob was not long in doing this, for in a day or two he brought in a frightful looking cat, and began to teach him the things which I had learnt so badly. Then I was afraid, for I knew they would not have anything living in the house that did not work for its food, and I thought Bob would want to sell my skin.

22. However, one day, Mother Sarah, who lived next door, came and said to Jack, "Will you sell me your pretty little cat? You know I have lost mine."

23. They soon made a bargain, and Mother Sarah lifted me up, wrapped me in her apron, and stroking me kindly, took me away.

CHAPTER VI.

MORE TROUBLES.

1. The old lady who had bought me was not at all like the two men I had just left. Her little cottage was very, very clean; her bed was neatly made and covered with a pretty counterpane, and there were curtains round it. Her fireside was always tidy and bright, and the

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dear, old lady treated me with so much kindness that my life was again happy.

2. For my bed, a piece of old carpet was laid in a corner near the fireplace; and at night-time I slept at the foot of my mistress's bed. In the morning, she gave me a share of her bread and butter, with plenty of milk, and every now and then a little bit of meat, of which I was very fond.

3. I loved the dear, old lady with all my love, and I tried to show her what I felt. If she went out of the house for a few minutes, as soon as she came back I ran to meet her, with my tail in the air, purring all the while. Then she would take me up in her arms and fondle me. How glad she seemed to have someone to love, and someone who loved her.

4. Her daughter, who was married, had some little children, and they came to see their grandmother every Sunday. During the week I was her only friend, and we were very happy together.

5. In the best room in my mistress's house lived a young man; he often stopped to look at me, when I was about the passage or sleeping on the step in the bright sunshine.

6. At last, he asked Mother Sarah if she would lend me to him sometimes, in the evening. He

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was a con-jur-er, he said, and he wished to use me in his tricks. But my mistress did not care for me to run any risks.

7. "I will take great care of her," said he, "and no harm of any kind shall come upon her. I will give you a shilling for every evening that I take her away from you." So at last she let me go, for Mother Sarah was very poor, and she felt that the little money she got would be useful.

8. My new master was a clever man; crowds of people came to see him when he gave his show. He did many things at which I wondered, just as much as did the people.

9. He placed me on a table amongst the boxes that he used for his tricks, and showed me to the people; he let two or three of them stroke me, and then, while they were looking, I was lost to sight. A few minutes after, I was found inside a hat at the other side of the room, and everyone wondered how I had got there. I was not quite sure myself.

10. My master was very kind to me. When he had done his tricks he placed me in a basket, and took me carefully back to my own mistress. She gave me a good supper, and fondled me in her arms, or on her knee, until I fell asleep. I lived thus for two or three years a very happy life.

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"The dear old lady treated me with much kindness."—*Page* 27.

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11. One evening after the show, the basket in which I was taken every night was full of flowers which my master was going to use next night. He did not wish to empty them out, so he took me up in his arms, covered me with his cloak, and we set off home together very late at night.

12. As we were going along, a man stopped us and said, "You have a nice cloak there, master, it is a cold night and I am without one; give it to me at once!"

13. The robber, for so he was, caught hold of a corner of the cloak which covered me. I was very much afraid, and hardly knowing what I did, I jumped straight into his face and scratched him, as hard as I could. Then, being still frightened, I ran away as fast as I could.

14. For some time I ran until I came to the open door of a shop which a young man was just closing. He did not see me as I crept in and ran behind the counter; then I hid myself among a bundle of papers.

15. The young man finished shutting up the shop, and, as soon as everything was quiet, I went to sleep, with an empty stomach and a sad heart. I could not help wondering what dear mother Sarah would think when my master returned without me.

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CHAPTER VII.

ANOTHER HOME.

1. As soon as it was light in the morning, I saw I was in the shop of a grocer. The young man who came to open the shop was surprised to find me lying under the counter. He called his mistress, who, seeing that I was a gentle cat, took me up and stroked me.

2. "What a pretty cat," said she. "We do not want one ourselves, but this will do nicely for Miss Jones, who was asking the other day if I knew of a nice one."

3. Next day, Miss Jones, a young lady, took me away. I was very sad, for I could not help thinking of poor Mother Sarah.

I was carried to the large house of Mrs. Smith, with whom Miss Jones was staying.

4. Again everyone was kind to me. I became a very important person in this house, and I might have been very happy and comfortable once more.

5. I think I have told you that one of my great faults was being greedy. One day a jug of milk was on the table. It had not yet been creamed, and I began lapping it up. The top was very narrow, still, by trying hard, I got my head inside. But when I wished to draw it out, I could not do so.

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6. I twisted it about in all ways; I pushed the jug with my paws; I tried to shake it off as though I was shaking a mouse, but I could not get free. I began to think I was going to have this jug fast on my head all the rest of my days, as a punishment for being a thief.

7. I was nearly choking, when the cook came into the kitchen. Seeing me in such a sad state, she took me up and pulled the jug off my head. What a sight I was! The cream was all over my face, and I *did* feel ashamed.

8. When my mistress heard of what I had done, she took me up in her arms, shook her finger at me, and said, "You naughty, little thief!" But, although I had many faults, everybody was kind to me, far more than I deserved.

9. The days passed very happily with me once more. I often wished I could do something to show my good friends how pleased I was to be with them; but, alas! I was never able to do anything.

10. I remember a tale I once heard about a very clever cat who did good ser-vice to his master, and made a great for-tune for him; I think he was called *Puss-in-Boots.* But nothing ever happened to me which gave me a chance of doing as *Puss-in-Boots* did.

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11. I loved everybody in this happy home, and I feel sad when I hear people say that cats have no love for the people they live with. It is a great mistake.

I am sure it is not true; I always feel more love for those who have been kind to me than ever I can tell.

CHAPTER VIII.

A FUNNY LITTLE GIRL.

1. Mrs. Smith had a grand-daughter whom she loved very dearly. Her name was May. Her mother died when she was only a little girl, and her father and she had lived with her grandmother ever since. She was about six years old.

2. May was a sweet and loving little girl, but she had a sad fault. She was always wishing to have a change. No sooner did a fancy come into her head than she wanted to have her wish attended to; then, before evening came, she had changed her mind once more and wanted something else.

3. Everyone tried to please her. She had beautiful dolls in a grand doll's house, and a basket full of doll's clothes; she had a rocking-horse, a box of soldiers, a little carriage with a

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horse that ran about on the floor when it was wound up, a beautiful set of tea-things, and so many other toys that I cannot tell you what they were. May should have been a very happy girl. Alas! she was not; for nothing ever seemed to please her long.

4. Her grand-mother often talked to her about this bad fault, and also spoke to her father about it. "May," she said, "is a good girl at heart, but she does not know the worth of money. I am sure she ought not to have everything she wants. She ought to learn that all the things she has have to be paid for by you."

5. So when May asked that something else might be bought for her, which she wished for very much, her grandmother said to her, "I am sure May, you have everything you want, and many things that you do not make any use of. There are lots of poor little boys and girls, as old as you, and many a great deal older, who have nothing to play with. They have not even plenty of bread to eat, nor have they clothes to keep them warm in the cold weather.

6. "The money your father has paid for one or two of your grand dolls would find some of these poor boys and girls with food to eat and clothes to wear. Do you not think it would be

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better to give something to these poor children than to have the money spent upon yourself?"

7. Then May put her arms round her grandmother's neck, and kissing her fondly, said, "Oh, keep the money, grandmother, and give it to the poor little boys and girls." For that day, May did not trouble her father or her grandmother to buy her anything more. But the next day, or the day after, she forgot, and was cross because she could not have what she wanted.

8. Miss Jones spoilt May quite as much as her father. No sooner had I come into the house than May wanted me, and asked her grandmother if I might be her own little cat. "I do not think, my dear, I can give you Fluff;" said grandmother. "You see she is not mine, and I should not like to take her away from Miss Jones."

9. But Miss Jones said at once, "Oh, yes! May can have Fluff. She has gone out now, and is playing about somewhere, but as soon as she comes back again I will bring her into the room."

10. "Oh! how good you are," said the little girl; "you will see how happy I shall be; Fluff shall be my own dear little cat. I will take such care of her, and love her, and then she will love me, will she not?"

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"If only you are kind to her," said Miss Jones, "I am sure she will love you."

11. Her grandmother agreed to this, but said, "If you tire of Fluff, or want something else to take her place, she must go back to Miss Jones."

12. "I shall never tire of her," said May. "I am sure I shall like her for ever and ever." So I was once more to change hands, but not to change houses.

13. When I came into the room, Miss Jones took me up and put me into May's arms, saying, "There is the dear, little cat for you, May; be kind to it."

14. I was at once taken up into the nurs-er-y. A pretty cushion was put down on the floor for me in a corner, and for many days, when May had nothing else to do, she spent her time with me.

15. I began to think I should never get back to Miss Jones's room any more, and I sometimes felt a little sad, because she had been very kind to me.

One morning, as May and her father were taking a walk down the street, they came to where a crowd of people were standing round a shop window watching a beautiful parrot.

16. The pretty bird was talking, and saying, "Poor Poll! Pretty Poll! Polly wants a sop!

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Poor Poll!" and all the people standing round laughed at the clever bird.

"Oh, Papa," said May, "what a lovely bird. Do let me have it!"

17. "No, May," said her father, "I do not think I can buy it for you. It will cost a great deal of money, and you know you have your little cat at home that you love so very much."

18. "Yes, Papa," said May; "but——," and as they walked on again, May did not finish what she was going to say. They had not got far before she was talking again about the parrot, and saying what a very lovely bird it was.

When she reached home, she had a long tale to tell her grandmother about the dear bird she had seen, and how well it could talk.

19. "I do wish I had it," said she. "I should be so glad, and I am sure you would like it. I could have all my little friends to see it. I would not tell them what it was, but we could stand and listen at the door, and then they would think someone was speaking inside the room."

20. At last, after May had begged her grandmother over and over again to let her have the parrot, the bird was bought. For a few days the little girl seemed quite happy watching Polly in its bright brass cage.

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21. But grandma did not forget the bargain she had made with May when I was given to her.

"You know what I said when Fluff was given to you," said grandmother. "She must now go back to Miss Jones."

22. But Miss Jones did not take me away at once. For several days I stayed where I was, and May played sometimes with me and sometimes with Polly, though I think she loved Polly more than she loved me.

I did not feel angry, for, you know, she was only a little girl, and I think she did not know much better. I was quite as pleased as she was to see 'Pretty Poll' playing about in her cage and to hear her talk.

23. One day, May was asked out to a party, and she was full of joy that afternoon. She had been playing with Polly and me, and sent the bird into her cage before she went to get ready; but she forgot to fasten the door.

24. I thought I should like to have a little play with Polly myself, so I jumped up to the cage, pulled at the door with my paw, and open it came.

25. Polly looked at me, and I think she wondered what I was doing there. She got very

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"Miss Jones took me up and put me into May's arms."—*Page* 36.

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angry, and came to the door and gave me a peck with her hard beak.

26. I did not like this, so I put my paw inside the cage and tried to knock Polly off her perch. Polly got more vexed than ever. She rushed at me again, and I ran away from the door, but she followed me.

27. I turned round at once, and I do not know why I did it, but I caught hold of the bird behind the neck and gave her a hard nip and shook her. She dropped from my mouth, and fell dead on the floor.

28. I did not wish to eat the poor bird, and I am sure I did not mean to hurt her. I did not know what to do, so I went into my corner, lay down on my cushion, and fell fast asleep.

29. How long I slept I do not know, but I was awakened by May crying out, "Oh, Pretty Poll! Look! Look!" and then she pointed to me in the corner.

30. "You naughty puss," said she, "Oh! you wicked thing, you have done this." I was not able to say that I had not wished to hurt Polly, though that was the truth; and I could not speak up for myself and say that Polly had pecked at me.

31. "Take the wicked thing away," cried May

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to Miss Jones, "and let her be drowned; I do not want to see her any more." So I was put into a basket and taken down into the kitchen, and given to one of the servants.

CHAPTER IX.

MORE CHANGES.

1. The servant took the basket on her arm, and went out into the street. What a noise there was—horses and carts, cabs and carriages, and the tramping of many people as they passed along the street!

2. At last a 'bus came rolling along, and when it got near to the servant she called out "Guard! please stop." Then she carried me inside and put the basket on the seat close by her.

3. After a time, the 'bus stopped in front of a big house. The servant got out, and carried me with her into the kitchen. In a few minutes an elderly lady came to her. She was the nurse. "Oh, Kate," said she, "I am so pleased to see you. What have you got there in the basket?"

4. Kate told what had happened to Polly, and that her mistress had said I was to be drowned. "But," said she, "Fluff is a dear little cat; I am

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sure she did not mean to hurt the parrot; it was all Polly's fault. I do not want her to be drowned."

5. "Oh!" said the nurse, "she is very pretty, I am sure she will be good. Leave her with me, I will take care of her."

6. So Kate took me out of the basket, put me on a chair, in which was a nice soft cushion, and there I was left.

Once more I felt happy. I thought I should like to stay at this house, and indeed, before many days, I was settled once more.

7. One morning, I had had my breakfast and was wandering about the house, when I came to a large room. It was one of many, and as the door was open I walked in, and looked round.

8. There, at the fireside, were a man and a boy, all black and dirty. I think I have never seen anyone so black before. They were sweeping the chimney.

9. The boy turned round, and, seeing me, pushed his black, sooty brush in my face. Oh! how frightened I was. My eyes flashed fire, and I was ready to spring upon him to punish him for his rudeness.

10. He pushed the brush once more into my face, and I turned round, rushed to the window,

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and jumped out. In my flight, I knocked down a flower-stand, and this made the servants come to see what was the matter.

11. The nurse soon saw how things were. She caught me, took me up in her arms, and was going to carry me back into the kitchen. But the cook stood in the door-way, and said, "I will not have that naughty crea-ture, she does all sorts of things. She shall not come here any more."

12. I began to be very much afraid, and scarcely knew what to do. I jumped out of nurse's arms, and seeing a door open at the end of the passage, I ran through it with all my might, and found myself once more in the street.

13. I ran down the street for a few yards, and jumped on to the ledge of a window. Just then, several young men came walking past the house. One of them, seeing me, said to his friends, "Look there!" and called, "Puss, Puss! come Puss! come Puss!" but I took no notice of him.

14. He then came up to the window, and was just going to take hold of me, when I jumped down, ran away as fast as I could, and seeing a door open in another house, I rushed inside.

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CHAPTER X.

A HAPPY MEETING.

1. The house I had entered was a very grand one. Inside the porch was a glass door. This was not closed, so I went forward and found myself in front of a large stair-case covered with a rich carpet. I went upstairs very slowly, and soon reached a beautiful bedroom.

2. As the door was just ajar, I peeped in, and I seemed to re-mem-ber the place at once. Suddenly an old lady came into the room, followed by a younger one, and then all my doubts were at once put at rest. I was not mistaken, it was the house of my first mistress. The young lady was Mary, now sev-er-al years older than when I first saw her.

3. I ran to my old mistress, and rubbed myself against her dress, and purred softly and sweetly, with my tail in the air. I tried to show, by all the signs I could, the joy I felt at finding myself once more back again in my first home. My old mistress did not know me, so she asked Mary who I was, and where I had come from.

4. Mary was not able to answer these questions, so my mistress took me up in her arms.

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"What a beautiful cat! look, Mary, how much it is like our old pet, Fluff, whom I gave away."

"Yes," said Mary, "that must be nearly six years since."

5. "I am sure it is the same cat," said the lady, "See, there is the black patch on its breast, and the tip of its tail also is black, just like Fluff's, and the beautiful white hair is the same.

"And look, Mary, how she is rubbing herself against me. I am sure she remembers me."

"Very likely," said Mary, "all cats are like that when you fondle them."

6. My mistress sat down, and took me upon her knee. "Really, Mary, I am sure the cat knows me, and now she has come back she shall stay. Yes, Fluff," said she, as she gently stroked me, "I will not give you away any more. I will take care of you, and we will be good friends. Mary," added she to the maid, "go down to the kitchen and bring some milk, I am sure the little thing must be hungry or thirsty."

7. It would take me a long time to tell of all the many happy days I spent once more in my old home. My mother, I learnt, had long been dead. I now took her place in my mistress's heart, and I wished fondly to end my days with her; but this was not to be.

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CHAPTER XI.

A SAD LOSS.

1. One night, my mistress was taken very sick; so much so that she had to call up Mary to come to her. Everyone in the house was soon awakened. A doctor was sent for, but, alas! he could do little, and the next day my dear, good mistress died.

2. I will not try to tell you how deep was the sorrow I felt, and how sad everybody in the house was. I was no longer allowed to go into my old mistress's bedroom, as I had been used to do for so many years.

3. Oh, how lonely the house was now! But I was not long to remain in this sad home. My late mistress had made a will, in which she ordered that, after her death, I was to be given to her dear friend, Mr. Wilson, a very learned and wise man, who could write beautiful books.

4. This old gentlemen was as kind as he was clever. He loved all kinds of animals, and he was indeed kind to me. It did not take me long to become used to my new home, and to love my new master. I believe he was one of the best men in the whole world.

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5. Mr. Wilson let me go into his study, and gave me a nice arm-chair, with a soft cushion on it, at the corner of the fire-place, all to myself; and when he was busy writing, I was the only one who was al-lowed to go into his room.

6. But Mr. Wilson was not my only friend here. I had a four-footed friend—a dog—and he was so loving to me, that I forgot the many foolish things that had been told me about naughty dogs.

7. *Foxy*, for that was his name, was a very good dog, with a sweet temper, and so patient with me, that I could not help but love him.

8. He was a very wise dog, and we soon became the best of friends; we ate out of the same dish, and slept together on the same piece of carpet.

9. But it always comes to pass that, however happy you are, changes take place. This good dog was taken from his master and me by a sad accident, just a year after I had been given to Mr. Wilson, and his death made us all very sad. For many days I could not eat, although all kinds of tit-bits were put in my dish for me. I wandered about from one room to another, seeking my dear friend in every corner, mewing, I am sure, in a sad tone of voice, hoping that he might hear me.

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10. I am now a very old cat, and I cannot say that my life has been a useful one. But, if the in-ci-dents which I have here told have interested you, and if they have taught you the good lesson, that one ought always to mind what is said to one, then I am more than satisfied.

11. I do want all you who read this little tale to remember also that a cat can feel grat-i-tude towards those who are kind to it, and that, if you treat us well, you will find that none of us are ungrateful.

NOTE BY THE EDITOR OF THE SERIES.

Mademoiselle C. Wislez, the authoress of this pleasing tale, was born in Belgium about 1806, and died in Paris in 1865. She came to England when about 18 years of age, and was engaged by Mr. Lewin, father of Mrs. Grote, the wife of the great Greek historian, to teach French to his daughters. She afterwards went to Paris and became companion to the daughters of Monsieur Guizot, Minister of Foreign Affairs to King Louis Philippe of France. At the time of the French Revolution in 1848, she secured the escape of M. Guizot's daughters to London, where they found refuge in the house of Mr. Broadwood, and were soon afterwards joined by their father, who escaped from France disguised as a footman.

Mlle. Wislez afterwards returned to France, but fell ill and was unable to continue her teaching. She tried to maintain herself by writing, though she did not make much money. *Aventures d'une Chatte, écrites par elle-même*, was one of the children's tales which she wrote for this purpose. It was published in England in 18_6, at the expense of Mr. H. F. Broadwood, who, with other of her old friends, assisted her when she fell upon hard times.

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PRINTED BY E. J. ARNOLD AND SON, LTD., AT THEIR WORKS, BUTTERLEY STREET, HUNSLET, LEEDS.
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pM-am-y-ch-29300a.